

Terminology in Arabic Theatrical Dictionaries¹

Ali Krim

Abu Bakr Belkaid Tlemcen, Algeria, Id orcid: 0000-0002-8273-5873

E-mail: Ali.krim@univ-tlemcen.dz

Elhabib Soualmi

Abu Bakr Belkaid Tlemcen, Algeria, Id orcid: 0009-0003-1669-8351

Elhabib.soualmi@univ-tlemcen.dz

Received date: 03.01.2025

Accepted date: 16.02.2025

Publication date: 25.03.2025

Abstract

The issue of terminology is one of the most challenging aspects in specialized lexicography in Arabic. In general, many terminological units in Arabic lexical systems have yet to reach a stage of stability or achieve unified efforts toward developing a comprehensive and standardized terminological dictionary. This situation has resulted in the lack of consensus on key dimensions, leading to the fragmentation of terms and concepts due to the multitude of references. In Arabic, phrasal verbs exhibit diverse terminological sources, ranging from foreign linguistic references (such as French and English) to classical Arabic heritage. As a result, the term has generally been approached by scholars from multiple perspectives, both in terms of terminology and conceptual structure. This is partly due to the prevalence of ambiguous terms that are challenging to define and abstract, as well as the varied interpretive frameworks applied to them. This study explores the issue of creating theatrical terminology in the Arabic language and examines how it can be addressed in specialized dictionaries. It highlights the importance of unifying theatrical terminology and providing reliable, up-to-date resources for professionals in the field. Furthermore, it showcases the specialized dictionaries and glossaries that have been developed while discussing the challenges encountered in these efforts, such as difficulties in translating terms from foreign languages and insufficient coordination among stakeholders.

Keywords: Theatrical terms; standardization of terms; specialized dictionaries; challenges; cooperation.

¹ **CC BY 4.0.** Authors expressly acknowledge the authorship rights of their works and grant the journal the first publication right under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License International CC-BY, which allows the published work to be freely distributed to others, provided that the original authors are cited and the work is published in this journal.

Citation: Krim A., Soualmi E. (2025). Terminology in Arabic Theatrical Dictionaries. *Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems*, 8(2), 5-25. <https://imcra-az.org/archive/358-science-education-and-innovations-in-the-context-of-modern-problems-issue-2-volviii-2025.html>

Introduction:

The issue of "terminology" continues to be a central focus in many discourses. Within the Arab cognitive system, terminology serves as a vital element ensuring the "continuity" of discourse across its various "functional" classifications. However, numerous challenges persist within the dialectic of terminology, primarily due to discrepancies in the terminological proposals found in the corpus of lexical Arabic.

There have been ongoing debates aimed at presenting a unified vision or establishing one approach while refuting others. Among the most significant intellectual and visionary discussions is the debate surrounding the integration of the terminological dimension into contemporary lexical Arabic? This debate centers on whether to adhere to the traditional roots of classical Arabic dictionaries or to adopt and adapt (translate and Arabize) terms from Western sources, often viewed as purely foreign constructs.

Especially since many students, as some argue, tend to use terms that they have either translated themselves or borrowed from existing translations without citing the original term in its source language or clearly defining the concept the term is intended to represent. This has been one of the primary factors contributing to terminological confusion, which in turn affects the accuracy and clarity of meaning in contemporary Arab lexicography.

There is no doubt that terminology plays a crucial role in the development and advancement of knowledge dissemination and research production in general. It has long served as the foundation of contemporary studies. However, despite its cognitive significance, several critical issues have emerged concerning its operational and conceptual implications.

Theater is one of the most important arts that reflects the culture of society and contributes to shaping its awareness. With the development of the theatrical movement in the Arab world, there arose an urgent need to unify theatrical terminology and integrate it into the Arabic language. Consequently, creating theatrical terminology in Arabic presents a significant challenge, particularly given the substantial influence of Western theater and its associated terminology.

The importance of this study lies in highlighting the current state of Arabic theatrical dictionaries and their role in standardizing and authenticating theatrical terminology. Despite the efforts made in this field, several challenges persist that continue to impede the processes of unification and authentication. These challenges have a negative impact on communication and mutual understanding among those engaged in Arab theater.

In an effort to delineate the current state of theatrical terminology in Arabic dictionaries, we have focused on the central issue of this study, which revolves around the following question:

How can Arabic theatrical dictionaries effectively contribute to the unification and authentication of theatrical terminology, and what challenges hinder this process?

Several sub-questions arise from this main question:

1. What is the current state of Arabic theatre dictionaries, and how effectively do they meet the needs of professionals in the field of theatre?
2. What are the primary challenges associated with translating and Arabizing foreign theatrical terms?
3. How can we strike a balance between preserving the distinctiveness of the Arabic language and adapting to global advancements in the field of theatre?
4. What mechanisms can facilitate collaboration and coordination between academics and practitioners to ensure the precision and comprehensiveness of theatrical terminology?

To address this issue, we have examined a range of specialized theatrical dictionaries, including both those that have been Arabized or translated and those developed through a lexical survey of various theatrical terms in contemporary Arab culture. This examination aims to identify the key elements of dictionary compilation and to analyze the variations and differences in the current terminological landscape.

- 1- This study aims to achieve the following objectives:
- 2-
- 3- Evaluate the current state of Arabic theatrical dictionaries and identify their strengths and weaknesses.
- 4- Analyze the challenges associated with creating and standardizing theatrical terminology in the Arabic language.
- 5- Propose mechanisms and solutions to improve Arabic theatrical dictionaries and strengthen their role in unifying terminology.
- 6- Provide recommendations for establishing a specialized body to standardize Arabic theatrical terminology and outline its responsibilities and operational framework.
- 7- Emphasize the importance of collaboration between academics and practitioners in the field of theater to ensure the precision and comprehensiveness of the terminology employed.
- 8- By accomplishing these objectives, the study aspires to contribute to the advancement of Arabic theatrical dictionaries and reinforce their role in supporting and enhancing the Arab theatrical movement.

Theatrical dictionaries:

Definition:

Theatrical dictionaries are monolingual or multilingual publications that focus on collecting, organizing, and defining theatrical terms. These dictionaries often include illustrative tools such as pictures and diagrams to help clarify concepts for the reader. As theatrical dictionaries span multiple disciplines, they encompass a wide range of subjects and areas of knowledge. One specialist has identified three lexical patterns for this art, which are: (Belkheiri, 1999)²

- **Dictionary of Playwrights and Directors:** This dictionary focuses on terms related to playwrights and directors, providing insights into their roles, techniques, and contributions to theater.
- **Dictionary of Theatre Directing and Stage Techniques:** This resource covers terminology associated with directing and stagecraft, offering detailed explanations of technical and artistic aspects of theatrical production.
- **Dictionary of Dramatic Textual Terms:** This dictionary catalogs key terms used in dramatic texts, helping readers understand the language and structure of plays.

Types of Theatrical Dictionaries:

Modern Arab scholars and linguists have developed several theatrical dictionaries, which can be categorized in the following historical sequence:

1. "Terminology in Theater (Arabic-English)" by Mahmoud Taymour, published in Al-Lisan Al-Arabi Magazine, Issue 2, January 1965. This work includes approximately 240 terms.
2. Dictionary of Dramatic and Theatrical Terms by Ibrahim Hamada, first published by Dar Al-Shaab, Cairo, in 1971, spans 322 pages. Its third edition, published by the Anglo-Egyptian Library in Cairo in 1994, consists of approximately 296 pages. This dictionary comprises 675 Arabic terms along with their English equivalents. Each Arabic entry is numbered and accompanied by its corresponding English term, followed by a clear definition. Additionally, the dictionary occasionally employs illustrations and diagrams to clarify certain entries.
3. The Dictionary of Theatre: Selections from the Dictionary of World Theatre by Edward Cohn and John Assen, translated by Mu'nis Al-Razzaz and reviewed by Rashad Rushdi.

²See: Ahmed Belkheiri: Theatrical Terminology Among the Arabs, Al-Boukili for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, Kenitra, 1st ed.: 1999 AD, p. 61.

Published jointly by the Arab Foundation for Studies and Publishing and Dar Al-Mahd for Publishing, Amman, 1982.

4. Dictionary of Theatrical Terms (English-Arabic) by Samir Abdul Rahman Al-Halabi, published by Dar Al-Mamoun in 1993.
5. Theatrical Dictionary (Arabic-English-French) by Mary Elias and Hanan Qassab Hassan, published by Lebanon Publishers Library in 1997. This comprehensive dictionary spans 620 pages and includes 293 entries.
6. Dictionary of Theatrical Terms by Ahmed Belkhiri. The first edition was published by Al-Najah New Press in Casablanca, Morocco, in 1997, with a second edition released in 2006.
7. Theater Figures and Theatrical Terminology by Walid Al-Bakri (2003), 312 pages. The book is divided into two sections: the first section, spanning 66 pages, focuses on theatrical terminology, while the second section, which comprises 238 pages, is dedicated to prominent figures in world theater.
8. European Theatre Flags and Terms by Kamal El-Din Eid, reviewed by Ibrahim Hamada (2006), spans 784 pages. The book provides lengthy and comprehensive definitions of theatrical terms; for instance, the term "theatrical theorist" is covered in three and a half pages, while "theatrical criticism" is explained in one page.
9. Dictionary of Theatre and Drama Terms (English-Arabic) by Mahmoud Muhammad Kahila (2008), approximately 296 pages. This dictionary lacks any references to sources.

Classification of Theatrical Dictionaries :

Theatrical dictionaries developed by modern Arab scholars can be categorized into several types based on three primary criteria: domain, linguistic scope, and lexical content. This classification aids in comprehending the nature and variety of resources available to researchers and practitioners in the realm of Arab theater.

In terms of scope, which pertains to the terminological coverage documented in the dictionary, two primary types of theatrical dictionaries can be identified. The first type comprises multidisciplinary theatrical dictionaries, which encompass not only theatrical terms but also terms from related dramatic arts, such as radio, cinema, and television. A representative example of this type is Dictionary of Theatre and Drama Terms by Mahmoud Mohammed Kahila. The second type consists of specialized theatrical dictionaries, which focus exclusively on theatrical terminology and exclude terms from other artistic domains. A notable example of this type is Dictionary of Theatrical Terms by Ahmed Balkhiry. (Haj Hani

Muhammad: Dictionaries of Critical Terms and Their Role in Enriching Critical Approaches to Theatrical Discourse, 2014)³

In terms of the number of languages, three distinct types of theatrical dictionaries can be identified. The first type consists of monolingual theatrical dictionaries, such as The Dictionary of Theatre: Selections from the Dictionary of World Theatre by Edward Cohn and John Assen, translated by Mu'nis al-Razzaz. The second type comprises bilingual theatrical dictionaries, exemplified by Dictionary of Theatrical Terms (English-Arabic) by Samir Abdul Rahman al-Halabi. The third type includes trilingual theatrical dictionaries, such as Theatrical Dictionary (Arabic-English-French) by Mary Elias and Hanan Qassab Hassan. (Haj Hani Muhammad: Dictionaries of Critical Terms and Their Role in Enriching Critical Approaches to Theatrical Discourse, 2014)⁴

In terms of lexical material, two primary types of theatrical dictionaries can be identified. The first type consists of dictionaries that focus solely on collecting theatrical terms, such as The Dictionary of Theatre: Selections from the Dictionary of World Theatre by Edward Cohn and John Assen. The second type comprises encyclopedic theatrical dictionaries, which include both theatrical terms and proper names, exemplified by Theatrical Personalities and Theatrical Terms by Walid Al-Bakri. (Haj Hani Muhammad: Dictionaries of Critical Terms and Their Role in Enriching Critical Approaches to Theatrical Discourse, 2014)⁵

It is evident that bilingual and multilingual theatrical dictionaries constitute the majority of works produced in this field. This phenomenon may be attributed to the fact that theater, as an art form, was largely introduced to Arab culture from the West. Consequently, many of its terms are of Western origin and have been adapted and translated into Arabic for Arab audiences. The variety of dictionaries available highlights the significant efforts undertaken to offer comprehensive and diverse resources for those engaged in theater in the Arab world, while preserving a link to the original sources of these terms.

Objectives of theatrical dictionaries:

Specialized theatrical dictionaries strive to accomplish a range of significant objectives, which can be outlined as follows:

First, these dictionaries aim to broaden the reach of theatrical terms and concepts, making them accessible to a wider audience. For instance, in his dictionary, Ibrahim Hamada

³See: Haj Hani Muhammad: Dictionaries of Critical Terms and Their Role in Enriching Critical Approaches to Theatrical Discourse, Al-Dhakira Magazine, Issue 03, p. 298.

⁴Looks: same.

⁵See: the previous reference, p. n.

endeavored to extend beyond the limited circle of specialists, targeting a broader audience that includes readers, viewers, and enthusiasts of theatrical culture. This inclusive approach plays a crucial role in fostering greater theatrical awareness across diverse segments of society. (Hamada, 1994)⁶

Secondly, these dictionaries highlight the significant contributions of theater pioneers to the advancement of this art form and the enrichment of its associated disciplines. This is evident in The Encyclopedia of Theatre Icons and Theatrical Terms , which features biographies of the most influential Arab and international authors, directors, and actors who have made substantial contributions to the evolution of global theater across various historical periods. (Al-Bakri, 2003)⁷

Third, these dictionaries aim to equip specialized readers with the fundamental terms used in the field of theater, offering concise definitions that align with the demands of the digital age. This approach is exemplified by Mahmoud Muhammad Kahila's methodology in compiling Dictionary of Theater and Drama Terms , where he emphasized presenting information in a rapid and accessible manner, catering to the needs of contemporary users. (Kahila, 2008)⁸

Fourth, these dictionaries strive to assist theatre students, particularly those working on their graduation theses, by simplifying their research process. This may have been the motivation behind Kamal El-Din Eid's development of a methodological dictionary dedicated to the study of arts in the Arab world, which seeks to serve as a dependable resource for researchers in the field of theatre. (Eid, 2006)⁹

It can be stated that theatrical dictionaries serve as comprehensive repositories of knowledge, preserving the origins of this art and its diverse methodologies, while documenting the careers of its most influential figures from the inception of theater to the present day. Consequently, these dictionaries form an invaluable resource for theatrical knowledge, catering to a wide range of users, from specialized academics to members of the general public who are engaged with theatrical culture.

Functions of Theatrical Dictionaries:

⁶See: Ibrahim Hamada: Dictionary of Theatrical and Dramatic Terms, Anglo-Egyptian Library, Cairo, 3rd ed., 1994, p. 07.

⁷Walid Al-Bakri: Encyclopedia of Theater Figures and Theatrical Terms, Osama Publishing and Distribution House, Amman, Jordan, 1st ed., 2003, p. 4.

⁸Mahmoud Muhammad Kahila: Dictionary of Theater Terms (English-Arabic), Hala Publishing and Distribution, Giza, 1st ed.: 1429 AH - 2008 AD, p. 03.

⁹Kamal El-Din Eid: Figures and Terminology of European Theater, Dar Al-Wafa for the World of Printing and Publishing, Cairo, 1st ed., 2006, p. 7.

The theatrical dictionary serves as a primary resource for terminology associated with the art of theater, often referred to as a "mixed art" because of its multifaceted nature, encompassing elements such as text, set design, recitation, and actor movement. This diversity renders the theatrical dictionary a unifying language for specialists across different domains of theater, including playwrights, directors, performers, and critics. Given the multitude of stakeholders involved in theatrical production, (Al-Bakri, 2003)¹⁰ The specialized theatrical dictionary aims to fulfill several key functions, the most prominent of which include:

Cognitive Function:

Specialized dictionaries strive to enhance the reader's comprehension of the language and terminology specific to the theatrical domain (Al-Qasimi, 1991). This objective arises from the critical role of terminology in the acquisition of scientific knowledge and the transmission of educational content, as these processes are intrinsically tied to grasping the theoretical principles and practical methodologies of the field. Given that terminology is often regarded as the "key to the sciences" and a foundational tool, mastering it is indispensable for any researcher or student engaged in the study of theater. (Al-Haydara, 2003)¹¹

It can be argued that the essence of any scientific discipline resides in its terminology. Those who grasp these terms gain a deeper understanding of the discipline itself, while those unfamiliar with them may struggle to fully comprehend its intricacies. It is here that the significance of the theatrical dictionary becomes evident, as it encompasses an extensive array of terms covering all facets of the theatrical arts, including theories, concepts, techniques, methodologies, and notable figures in theater.

What sets a specialized theatrical dictionary apart from a general literary dictionary is its depth and comprehensiveness in covering theatrical terminology. Statistical studies reveal a marked difference between theatrical dictionaries and general literary dictionaries in the number of sub-terms related to the concepts of "theater" (Theater) and "drama." This discrepancy underscores the critical role of specialized dictionaries in offering a thorough and precise resource for theatrical terms, thereby enhancing comprehension and supporting research and study in this domain. This is illustrated in the table below: (Haj Hani Muhammad: Dictionaries of Critical Terms and Their Role in Enriching Critical Approaches to Theatrical Discourse, 2014)¹²

¹⁰Walid Al-Bakri: Encyclopedia of Theater Figures and Theatrical Terms, p. 04.

¹¹See: Mustafa Tahir Al-Haydara: Issues of Arabic Linguistic Terminology, Modern World of Books, Jordan, 1st ed.: 1424 AH 2003 AD, vol. 1: p. 09.

¹²Hajj Hani Muhammad: Dictionaries of critical terms and their role in enriching critical approaches to theatrical discourse, pp. 299-300.

Comparison of Theatrical and General Literary Dictionaries: Number of Sub-Terms Related to "Stage/Theater" and "Drama"

Type of Dictionary	Dictionary Name	Sub-Terms for "Stage/Theater"	Sub-Terms for "Drama"
Theatrical Dictionaries	Dictionary of Dramatic and Theatrical Terms	91 terms	51 terms
	Dictionary of Theatre and Drama Terms	33 terms	40 terms
	Flags and Terms of European Theatre	67 terms	12 terms
General Literary Dictionaries	Literary Dictionary	6 terms	2 terms
	Dictionary of Literary Terms	11 terms	6 terms
	Detailed Dictionary of Literature	24 terms	2 terms

The comparison clearly demonstrates that general literary dictionaries fail to adequately meet the needs of specialized readers, particularly in the realm of theater. These dictionaries are unable to encompass the extensive array of theatrical terms and their precise definitions. By contrast, specialized theatrical dictionaries stand out for their comprehensiveness, as they address:

- 1 The foundational sciences of theater.
- 2 Core concepts within the field.
- 3 A variety of theatrical theories.

4 Significant methodologies in theater studies.

Furthermore, specialized theatrical dictionaries offer detailed biographies of many of the most influential figures in the history of theater, spanning both ancient and modern eras.

Communicative Function:

Specialized dictionaries aim to ensure effective communication among experts by serving as a structured communicative system within the technical domain. Within the broader linguistic framework, scientific terms often function as dual conventions, existing both as specific terms and as components of larger terminological systems. Consequently, these terms form a secondary communicative system nested within the primary linguistic system, while also functioning as signs derived from a wider semiotic framework. In essence, specialized dictionaries represent a highly standardized and precise form of language, characterized by a reduced degree of ambiguity and a narrower focus on technical accuracy. (Al-Masdi, 1984)¹³

This is clearly reflected in theatrical dictionaries, which define terms with precision for specific purposes within both theoretical and practical contexts, ensuring their appropriate usage. Such definitions not only promote accurate application but also facilitate critical and cognitive communication among theater critics, as well as between critics and general readers. By eliminating ambiguity and potential confusion, these dictionaries help prevent bewilderment in the minds of recipients, irrespective of their level of familiarity with theater. Examples of such terms include directing, crisis, chapter, appendices, represents, and others.

Classification function:

This characteristic is evident in the specialized dictionary, which compiles the most extensive collection of terms related to a specific field. One of the key features of constructing any body of knowledge is the establishment of a specialized dictionary. Words in a language can generally be categorized into distinct groups connected by logical relationships, forming an independent system. The development of a specialized dictionary embodies this classification and organization, serving as its tangible representation. This is because such dictionaries assist students in grasping the concepts of a particular science or art, as the human mind naturally seeks to group words and uncover new connections between them. (Vendryes, 1950)¹⁴ This is precisely what occurs in a theatrical dictionary, which systematically catalogs the terms from the various subfields of this art, classifying and organizing them in a logical sequence, as

¹³See: Abdel Salam Al-Masdi: Dictionary of Linguistics (Arabic-French and French-Arabic) with an introduction to terminology, Dar Al-Arabiya for Books, 1st ed., 1984 AD, p. 13.

¹⁴Joseph Vendryes: Language, translated by: Abdul Rahman Al-Dawakhli and Muhammad Al-Qassas, Arab Statement Committee Press, Cairo, 1st ed., 1950, p. 232.

evident in the following example: (Haj Hani Muhammad: Dictionaries of Critical Terms and Their Role in Enriching Critical Approaches to Theatrical Discourse, 2014)¹⁵

¹⁵Hajj Hani Muhammad: Dictionaries of critical terms and their role in enriching critical approaches to theatrical discourse, p. 300.

Distribution of Terms Across Sub-Domains in Theatrical Dictionaries

Sub-Domain	Number of Terms	Examples
Stage (Theater / Théâtre)	92	For Kids - Commercial - Experimental - Documentary - Educational
Drama (Drame / Drama)	51	Feelings - Literary - Ideas - Human
Comedy (Comédie / Comedy)	24	Social - Artificiality - Clowning - Romanticism
Personality (Personnage / Character)	13	Primary - Motive - Basic - Auxiliary - Opposing
Acting (Représentation / Action)	12	Instructional - Speech - Romantic - Silent - Exaggerated

From the foregoing, the role of the theatrical dictionary in systematically classifying theatrical concepts and organizing their associated terms in a structured manner becomes evident. This facilitates the researcher's ability to identify the key subcategories encompassed within each fundamental term.

Purpose of Specialized Dictionaries:

The primary goal of developing specialized dictionaries is to precisely and comprehensively delineate the boundaries of a particular field of knowledge. These dictionaries serve to compile and define terms that are unique to a specific scientific or technical domain, thereby helping to establish the distinct identity of that field and differentiate it from other areas of knowledge.

The terminology of a scientific discipline can be seen as a conceptual framework that defines the field and clarifies its epistemological boundaries. This framework functions as a tool

for organizing and categorizing knowledge, enabling the distinction of the core concepts of the discipline and differentiating them from those of other fields of study.

It can be regarded as a conceptual framework that establishes a robust boundary and serves as a protective stronghold for a scientific discipline. This framework acts like a fence, safeguarding the integrity of the field. It reinforces the sanctity of its core principles, discouraging deviation into unrelated domains and preventing external influences from encroaching upon its established foundations. (Al-Masdi, 1984)¹⁶

From this perspective, specialized terms can be regarded as cognitive boundaries that serve to:

1. Define the scope of a scientific discipline and delineate its domain with clarity.
2. Prevent conceptual overlap with other fields of study.
3. Minimize confusion and ambiguity in the interpretation and understanding of scientific concepts.

Thus, specialized dictionaries serve a crucial function in advancing and systematizing scientific knowledge while fostering effective communication among researchers and specialists within the same discipline.

A specialized dictionary in any field of knowledge or industry serves to revive and evoke concepts in the mind of the researcher, as there is an intrinsic link between a term and its corresponding concept. When a term is invoked, its associated concept is immediately recalled, and the restoration of the concept inherently points back to the term that represents it. For instance, terms like output, crisis, peak, act (chapter), appendices, represents, and other theatrical terms rooted in metaphor may carry general linguistic meanings for all speakers. However, when these terms are part of the theatrical lexicon, they specifically refer to theater-related contexts alone. Consequently, their meanings are fully comprehensible only within the framework agreed upon by specialists. For example, the term act (chapter) denotes "a fundamental unit of dramatic composition, wherein the overall action of a play is divided into distinct structural segments". (Hamada, 1994)¹⁷ The origin of this word traces back to Latin, where actus means "action, movement, or behavior". (Kahila, 2008)¹⁸

¹⁶Abdel Salam Al-Masdi: Dictionary of Linguistics (Arabic-French and French-Arabic) with an introduction to terminology, p. 11.

¹⁷Ibrahim Hamada: Dictionary of Theatrical and Dramatic Terms, p. 187.

¹⁸Mahmoud Muhammad Kahila: Dictionary of Theatre Terms, (English-Arabic), p. 06.

Within the broader field of theater, one can also examine its various branches. A student may observe that terms such as dialogue, plot, resolution, roles, characters, and ending directly correspond to concepts inherently tied to the theatrical text. On the other hand, terms like set design, lighting, scenery, sound, and costumes pertain to theatrical performance and the methods and techniques it entails. (Haj Hani Muhammad: Dictionaries of Critical Terms and Their Role in Enriching Critical Approaches to Theatrical Discourse, 2014)¹⁹

Discrimination function:

The specialized dictionary serves as the cornerstone in organizing the terminological framework of any intellectual or creative domain. It acts as a safeguard against conceptual confusion and overlap, whether due to semantic ambiguity or similarities in wording. This insight was articulated by the scholar Al-Tahnawi in his introduction to Persian studies, where he emphasized: "Precision in terminology is paramount for acquiring knowledge. Every discipline possesses its own unique terms, and without a clear grasp of these, scholars face significant challenges in navigating or deeply engaging with that field. Without such clarity, establishing a reliable foundation for further inquiry becomes nearly impossible". (Al-Thanawi, 1996)²⁰, Thus, the pressing necessity of acquiring both scholarly knowledge and popular arts hinges on a thorough understanding of the terminology specific to each discipline. Without such understanding, learners may struggle to grasp the content of the field and delve into its deeper intricacies.

The primary function of a theatrical dictionary is to illuminate the nuanced distinctions between concepts that might appear similar to the general audience. A precise terminological definition helps eliminate ambiguity and elucidate the exact meanings of specific terms. For instance, the term plot in theater refers to "a series of interconnected events driven by the conflicting desires of the characters. These conflicts are expressed through actions that shape the progression of the play's events from start to finish". (Kahila, 2008)²¹, Thus, the entanglement of events, driven by the conflicting motives of the characters, influences the trajectory of the story throughout its entirety. In this context, researcher Ibrahim asserts that

¹⁹Hajj Hani Muhammad: Dictionaries of critical terms and their role in enriching critical approaches to theatrical discourse, p. 301.

²⁰Mohammed Ali Al-Thanawi: Encyclopedia of the Scout of Art and Science Terminology, edited by: Rafiq Al-Ajam and others, Lebanon Publishers Library, Beirut, Lebanon, 1st ed.: 1996 AD, Vol. 1: p. 01.

²¹Mahmoud Muhammad Kahila: Dictionary of Theatre Terms, (English-Arabic), pp. 209-210.

Hamada similarly views the plot as the process of structuring and interconnecting theatrical elements to create specific artistic and emotional impacts. (Hamada, 1994)²²

Furthermore, the theatrical dictionary enables the distinction between various types of plots in a theatrical work: (Hamada, 1994)²³

1. الحبكة البسيطة (Simple Plot)
2. الحبكة المعقدة (Complex Plot)
3. الحبكة المزدوجة (Double Plot)
4. الحبكة المحكمة (Tight Plot)
5. الحبكة المفككة (Loose Plot)

This classification facilitates a deeper comprehension of the structural elements of theatrical texts and enhances their accurate analysis.

The Encyclopedia of Theater Figures and Theatrical Terms offers multiple definitions of the term pantomime, arranged chronologically to reflect the evolution of this concept throughout history and its diverse applications across various theatrical contexts. These definitions may be summarized as follows: (Al-Bakri, 2003)²⁴

Greek Origin:

An actor wearing a three-section mask, with each section representing a different character.

The actor must indicate the intended character through non-verbal gestures and expressions.

Classical Ballet:

A form of theatrical dance that emerged in the 18th century.

Its themes are often inspired by ancient mythology.

British Tradition:

Traditional theatrical performances staged in British theaters during the Christmas season.

Pierrot's Character:

²²See: Ibrahim Hamada: Dictionary of Theatrical and Dramatic Terms, p. 93.

²³ See: Ibid., pp. 93-94.

²⁴See: Walid Al-Bakri: Encyclopedia of Theater Figures and Theatrical Terms, pp. 21-22.

Refers to the silent role of the iconic theatrical figure, Pierrot.

Advanced Silent Theatre:

Originating as silent performances, this genre later evolved to incorporate adventure narratives interspersed with songs and chants.

Circus Shows:

Theatrical scenes featuring acrobatic acts performed by world-renowned circus troupes.

Motor Expression in Modern Theatre:

Refers to segments of a play where the playwright conveys ideas without dialogue.

It also describes the expressive physical movements executed by actors during moments of silence.

This variety of definitions demonstrates how the concept of pantomime has transformed over time, evolving from its roots in ancient Greek theater to its diverse applications in contemporary performance art. Furthermore, it underscores the critical role of specialized dictionaries in documenting the historical progression of theatrical terms and elucidating their varied contexts across different eras and traditions.

Civilizational function:

The creation of specialized dictionaries serves as an indicator of a society's level of development and vividly reflects the intellectual maturity attained by its scholars. These dictionaries act as repositories of knowledge, encapsulating the scholarly achievements of a generation and safeguarding them for posterity. The production of such dictionaries is a tangible manifestation of a nation's intellectual and cultural advancement. Consequently, it is essential to recognize that knowledge is a universal human endeavor, accessible to and enriched by all civilizations.

Consequently, Arabic theatrical dictionaries vividly illustrate the degree to which Arab researchers align themselves with contemporary advancements in the field of theater, encompassing both theoretical frameworks, emerging trends, and innovative techniques that drive the evolution and progress of this art form. In today's globalized world, Arab drama urgently requires greater engagement with international dramatic traditions, a connection that

promises significant advantages for individuals, communities, and humanity as a whole. (Kahila, 2008)²⁵

In this regard, Ahmed Belkhiri states: "The reality is that there is no room for fanaticism in the realm of theatrical terminology. It is a collective civilizational achievement, shaped and refined through the contributions of diverse cultures. Moreover, it serves as a luminous guide promoting cultural interaction and openness" (Belkheiri, 1999)²⁶, The director's primary mission is essentially to "create the illusion for the audience that they are experiencing a natural environment and living through a vivid slice of life". (Al-Ashmawy, 1983)²⁷ There is an urgent need to adopt the latest methods of theatrical presentation and scenography employed in countries that have achieved significant advancements in the evolution of theater, so as to assess the level of progress and the sophistication of theatrical production in the Arab world.

Finally, the limited number of specialized theatrical dictionaries remains one of the most significant challenges hindering the production and unification of theatrical terminology in the Arabic language. This limitation manifests in several ways, significantly impacting the growth of the Arab theater field and its capacity to align with global advancements.

First, there is a conspicuous absence of specialized Arabic theatrical dictionaries. The availability of such resources is markedly lower compared to general literary dictionaries, creating a notable gap in the tools accessible to researchers and practitioners in the theater domain. This scarcity restricts their ability to rely on reliable, comprehensive sources that provide precise and specialized theatrical terminology. Furthermore, the existing specialized dictionaries are often outdated, failing to reflect contemporary developments in the world of theater. Consequently, they are ill-equipped to meet the evolving needs of theater professionals.

Secondly, many theatrical terms are embedded within broader literary dictionaries rather than being compiled in standalone theatrical dictionaries. This overlap results in a lack of clarity and precision in defining theatrical terms, as they are intermingled with other literary and artistic concepts. Additionally, general literary dictionaries frequently fall short in offering detailed and accurate explanations of theatrical terms, impeding a thorough understanding and effective application of these terms within the theatrical context.

²⁵See: Mahmoud Muhammad Kahila: Dictionary of Theatre Terms, (English-Arabic), p. 04.

²⁶Ahmed Belkhiri: Theatrical Terminology among Arabs, p. 23.

²⁷Mohamed Zaki Al-Ashmawy: Yes Studies in Theater Criticism and Comparative Literature, Dar Al Nahda Al Arabiya for Printing and Publishing, Beirut, 1983, p. 287.

This limitation has far-reaching consequences for Arab theater. It obstructs communication and mutual comprehension among individuals involved in theater, whether academics or practitioners. Such deficiencies lead to inconsistencies in the usage and interpretation of terminology, erecting barriers to collaboration and development in the field. Moreover, it negatively affects teaching and training processes, as students and trainees struggle to access accurate and comprehensive sources of theatrical terminology.

Furthermore, researchers in the field of theater encounter substantial obstacles due to the dearth of specialized dictionaries, which undermines the quality of academic research and studies. Relying on general dictionaries may result in inaccuracies and ambiguity in term usage, thereby compromising the reliability of research outcomes and their potential contribution to the advancement of the field.

Recommendations:

Given the challenges associated with the Arabic lexicographic industry, it is essential to propose solutions and suggestions in the form of recommendations aimed at narrowing areas of difference and reducing technical reference variation. These recommendations also seek to bridge the gap among those working in the field of theater studies:

Establishing a specialized body to standardize Arabic theatrical terminology:

It is crucial to establish a dedicated institution responsible for unifying and standardizing Arabic theatrical terminology. This body should encourage further research and study in the field while emphasizing the importance of collaboration between academics and professionals to ensure the accuracy and comprehensiveness of terminology used in theater.

Publishing unified and regularly updated Arabic theatrical dictionaries:

Efforts should be directed toward issuing comprehensive, standardized theatrical dictionaries that are continuously updated. Such dictionaries will enhance communication and mutual understanding among all stakeholders in Arabic theater and help preserve and enrich the Arabic language in this vital domain. They will also ensure that the dictionaries remain relevant by incorporating new terms and modern techniques as the field evolves.

Creating specialized theatrical dictionaries with comprehensive coverage:

There is a need to develop specialized theatrical dictionaries that include precise and exhaustive terms encompassing all aspects of theater. These dictionaries should draw on the

experiences and expertise of Arab theater professionals while addressing contemporary requirements. Additionally, periodic updates must be ensured to keep pace with advancements in the field, including emerging concepts and innovative methods.

Promoting collaboration between academics and practitioners:

Encouraging cooperation between scholars and practitioners in the theater field is vital for refining and expanding theatrical terminology. Such collaboration can lead to the development of specialized dictionaries that meet the needs of all parties involved. Furthermore, there is a pressing need to create comprehensive educational resources, including detailed explanations of theatrical terms, to support teaching and training initiatives and foster a deeper understanding of the field.

By implementing these recommendations, the limitations of specialized theatrical dictionaries can be addressed, fostering improved communication and shared understanding among all individuals engaged in the field. Ultimately, these efforts will contribute significantly to the growth and flourishing of Arab theater.

Bibliographie

- Al-Ashmawy, M. Z. (1983). *Studies in Theater Criticism and Comparative Literature*. Beirut: Dar Al Nahda Al Arabiya for Printing and Publishing.
- Al-Bakri, W. (2003). *Encyclopedia of Theater Figures and Theatrical Terms*. Amman, Jordan: Osama Publishing and Distribution House.
- Al-Haydara, M. T. (2003). *Issues of Arabic Linguistic Terminology*. Jordan: Modern World of Books.
- Al-Masdi, A. S. (1984). *Dictionary of Linguistics (Arabic-French and French-Arabic) with an introduction to terminology*. Dar Al-Arabiya for Books.
- Al-Qasimi, A. (1991). *Linguistics and Lexicography*. Saudi Arabia: King Saud University.
- Al-Thanawi, M. A. (1996). *Encyclopedia of the Scout of Art and Science Terminology, edited by: Rafiq Al-Ajam and others*. Beirut, Lebanon: Lebanon Publishers Library.
- Belkheiri, A. (1999). *Theatrical Terminology Among the Arabs, Al-Boukili for Printing*. Kenitra: Publishing and Distribution,.
- Eid, K. E.-D. (2006). *Figures and Terminology of European Theater*. Cairo: Dar Al-Wafa for the World of Printing and Publishing.
- Haj Hani Muhammad: Dictionaries of Critical Terms and Their Role in Enriching Critical Approaches to Theatrical Discourse, A.-D. M. (2014). Dictionaries of Critical Terms and Their Role in Enriching Critical Approaches to Theatrical Discourse. *Al-Dhakira Magazine*, 2(1), 297-309.

Hamada, I. (1994). *Dictionary of Theatrical and Dramatic Terms*. Cairo: Anglo-Egyptian Library.

Kahila, M. M. (2008). *Dictionary of Theater Terms (English-Arabic)*. Giza, egypt: Hala Publishing and Distribution.

Vendryes, J. (1950). *Language, translated by: Abdul Rahman Al-Dawakhli and Muhammad Al-Qassas*. Cairo: Arab Statement Committee Press.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

IMCRA - International Meetings and Journals Research Association

www.imcra-az.org; E-mail (Submission & Contact): editor@imcra-az.org

[Science, Education and Innovations in the context of modern problems - ISSN: 2790-0169 / 2790-0177](https://doi.org/10.56334/sei)



DOI prefix

[10.56334/sei](https://doi.org/10.56334/sei)